

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



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Ravalli County Commissioners

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From: Carol Ballew, PhD, Epidemiologist, Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program

Greetings.

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program is pleased to send you the April Tobacco Surveillance Report, documenting the good news about reductions in youth smoking. Even though the next report was not due until April, we wanted to share this news with you now. We hope you are as excited as we are by this positive trend and that you will support MTUPP's youth activities (described on the back page of the report) in your area.

Tobacco Surveillance Report

April 2007

Smoking Declines Among Montana Teens

There was a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of students who reported smoking, from 19% in 2004 to 17% in 2006. Decreases were reported by both boys and girls. There were also decreases in the proportion of students who reported having close friends who smoked and in the perception that smoking was cool. The consistency of decreases in the domains of students' own behavior, friends' behavior, and perceptions of social desirability of smoking all suggest real change has occurred.

Although the majority of students perceived that cigarettes were easy to get, the proportion who believed this decreased from 73% to 68%. Among students who smoked, there was a slight decrease in the proportion who bought their own cigarettes. The decrease was confined almost exclusively to 12th graders because very few 8th or 10th graders reported buying cigarettes. In 2006, 56% of 12th graders reported buying their own cigarettes, compared to 63% in 2004. Although this was a significant decline ($p < .0001$), more than half of 12th graders still reported buying their own cigarettes. Sixty percent of the 12th graders who smoked were 18 or 19 years old. These students can buy tobacco products legally. They may also be the source of cigarettes for younger students, because 75% of 8th graders and 63% of 10th graders said they got their cigarettes from someone else or gave others money to buy cigarettes for them.

In spite of easy availability of cigarettes, smoking has declined among Montana youth in the past two years. The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program continues to implement youth prevention initiatives to further reduce youth tobacco use (see page 4).

The Addictive and Mental Disorders Division of the Chemical Dependency Bureau, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, has conducted the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) community student survey every other year since 1998.¹ The survey is distributed to all 8th, 10th, and 12th grade classrooms in schools that choose to participate. In 2006, 153 of Montana's 231 schools and 22,194 students participated. Based on Montana Office of Public Instruction enrollment data,² 53% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders statewide participated in the survey. Within participating schools, the completion rate was 86%. Surveys were evaluated on the basis of three dishonesty indicators (a question about how honest the student was in completing the survey; reported use of a nonexistent drug; implausibly high 30-day or lifetime drug use), and inappropriate age or grade ranges. Ten percent of the surveys were eliminated for one or more of these reasons. A total of 18,594 surveys were retained for analysis.

¹ For more information about the PNA, please visit <http://www.prevention.mt.gov/pna/2006.asp>

² <http://www.opi.mt.gov/>

Youth Activities in The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP) supports youth-led prevention initiatives as part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce tobacco use in Montana. In June 2006, *reACT! Against Corporate Tobacco*, Montana's first and only teen movement against tobacco, was launched. Following in the footsteps of the critically-acclaimed Truth[®] campaign, *reACT* incorporates media literacy, advocacy, and a focus on the tobacco industry's deception and targeting of teenagers.

One hundred forty teens from 50 Montana communities came to the inaugural *reACT* teen summit at Montana State University-Bozeman. More than 200 are expected for the June 2007 summit at Carroll College in Helena. *reACT* is led by a 21-member Teen Leadership Team, who provide insight into program activities and initiatives. The Team is trained by MTUPP staff to be leaders in tobacco prevention at the state and local levels.

MTUPP also offers youth mini-grant opportunities for *reACT* coalition development and awareness/outreach activities. Youth have spearheaded educational campaigns across the state, many of them coinciding with national Tobacco Days of Action such as the Great American Smoke Out and Kick Butts Day. Activities range from a display of 1,400 pairs of shoes in Billings (representing the number of Montanans killed each year by tobacco-related diseases), to Native American youth recording public service announcements in Great Falls, to teens chalking the sidewalks with tobacco industry quotes and facts in Helena.

MTUPP also has Memoranda of Understanding with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division, and the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Funding from MTUPP enabled BBBS to match 99 adult mentors with high-risk youth. AMDD provided media literacy education to seven community programs across the state. As a result of collaboration with MTUPP, OPI now has a Tobacco Education Specialist who oversees 25 school-based tobacco prevention and education grants.

MTUPP's youth activities are intended to change the norms about tobacco use among youth and counter the effects of tobacco industry marketing in Montana (estimated at \$49.9 million in 2005). We expect to see continued declines in tobacco use among our youth.

Please visit our website at www.tobaccofree.mt.gov

Alternative accessible formats of this publication will be provided on request. For further information, contact Carol Ballew, PhD, Epidemiologist, Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, at 406-444-6988, cballew@mt.gov

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